

[Louis Lutjeharms]

Week No. 5

Item No. 9

Words

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Received

Accredited

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FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Eilert Mohlman ADDRESS Columbus, Nebr.

DATE Feb. 10/39 SUBJECT Folklore

1. Name and address of informant Louis Lutjeharms, Columbus, Nebr.
2. Date and time of interview 2/10-13-14-
3. Place of interview His place of residence
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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Has comfortable room in private family. House situated on edge of city limits on main highway. Has lived there about a year. [????]

FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Eilert Mohlman ADDRESS Columbus, Nebr.

DATE Feb. 10/39 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Louis Lutjeharms, Columbus, Nebr.

1. Ancestry - Of German descent
2. Place and date of birth - [?] County farm, Jan. 8, 1870
3. Family - Unmarried
4. Place lived in, with dates - Farm until 1903 then to Columbus to date
5. Education, with dates - Country English and German schools [1880-1887?]
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates - Farmer until 1903; In lament business 1903-1914; Salesman 1914-1920
7. Special skills and interests - Salesmanship - takes great interest in politics and the economic situation of today.
8. Community and religious activities - German Lutheran faith
9. Description of informant - 5' 11", about 176 lbs; slender build somewhat deaf.
10. Other points gained in interview - is very interested in current events and spends a great deal of his time in reading and studying.

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FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Eilert Mohlman ADDRESS Columbus, Nebr.

DATE Feb. 10/39 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Louis Lutjeharms, Columbus, Nebr.

It [spooked?] too, on our farm. One evening when my sister carried water from the Lutjelusche farm, it got dark right after sundown and about a quarter of a mile from our house a fire ball or lighted lantern came close towards her, but there was nothing carrying it. The fireball just floated about fifteen inches from the ground.

We also had a lot of trouble to get a good well close to the house on the homestead farm. The east forty was level black soil table land, and the west forty sloped down to Ash brook, which had good running water, and about seven thousand oak, ash, elm, and other trees, such as cherries, plums, grapes, etc. on its banks. First my father dug down on the edge of the bank about twenty feet deep to some of the best water in the state of Nebraska, and from the top of the well he built a ten foot platform level with the bank, but it was some four hundred yards to carry water to the house. A few years later they bored a well with an eight inch auger about thirty feet north of the house, and went down one hundred and ten feet where they struck a slate and could not go down deeper. Then they bored another hole about half ways down towards the well on Oak Brook, and at one hundred feet down they struck the shale stone. Then they tied a rope on a crowbar bar and let it down in the hole and pounded a hole through the stone, 2 when all at once there was a lot of niose in the hole. I was standing on the lower side of the hole, and they said I should [run?] away from the lower side that the water was coming up in the hole and would flow down the hill, but the water did not come up; so after a while they put the auger down in the hole again and turned it and then they pulled it up again to see what was on it. There was same bluish clay and a four inch slate stone on it and was three inches thick and there was

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water in the hole too. They finished the well but the water did not come in fast enough, and when the water stood over night the next morning there was a bluish cream on it, and my father lighted some of the cream with a match and it burned.

When one of our neighbors came over to our house and said he thought he could find the water with a small green willow tree fork which he had in his hand; so my father said that it might be a good idea and that he was willing to try it. The willow tree had two prong branches and a part of the stem. He then took a branch in each hand and the stem pointed up, and when he walked from the house towards the barn and about thirty steps from the house the stem turned, and he walked over the ground several times, and then he said, if you will dig right down here about forty feet, I feel sure that you will get a good well. When we had dug down thirty-six feet we struck a good flowing spring, and we dug down to forty feet and we always had four feet of fresh water in the well.

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In our home we always talked the old "Platt Deutch" trible language, but my father started to teach me the High German language at home. When I was about ten years old they built a school house in our district two miles from our home and then for three winters I went to school and learned the English language, and two winters I went to the German Lutheran church school and was confirmed in the Lutheran religion. After that I learned everything that I know [?] college.

I have had four natural visions in nature, or, I have seen four [s ocks?] or mirages in natural colors of man, clothes, cattle, horses, steam threshing outfit and a train all lighted up, all in natural color, shape and moving. Once at eight o'clock in the morning, north of Schuyler, on the road in front of the bluffs, I saw two better farm [homes?] in a kind of a fog above the houses along the road. All these mirages were plainly for about five minutes and then they got dim and disappeared. The farm home scenery was a mile away from me, and in a northwest direction, and the train was five blocks north of me. The other two I saw

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at sunset time. The man riding a horse and driving a herd of cattle was one-fifth of a mile from me. These mirages are the most beautiful natural colored picture shows in the world.